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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes recent developments in providing information services to people who are seeking employment, advancement, or career changes. The focus is primarily on the work of job information centers in New York State, where the idea was pioneered by the prototype established in the Yonkers Public Library. Sections discuss the history of the library's role in career information services, the character of such services, the staffing of employment information centers, economic factors affecting service, self-help for service users, inter-agency coordination, programming of services, career counseling, publicizing of services, evaluating them, and the need for job information services. (Author/PM)

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CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

How Public Libraries Can Provide An Essential Community Service

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

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Changing Role of Public Libraries:

1. Neighborhood Information Service Centers
2. Serving Citizens with Special Needs
3. Career and Employment Information Services
4. Continuing Education Services
5. New Technology for Libraries
6. Strengthening the Library Profession

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INTRODUCTION

The last third of a century has seen major changes in the role of the public library in American life. In that period—the thirty-three years since the end of World War II--television has become a standard fixture in every household; supermarkets and drugstores have installed mass-market paperback book racks which place recreation reading within everyone's reach; significant advances have occurred in a whole new field of science and exploration—outer space; higher education has stimulated an unparalleled quest for information and learning, with increasing emphasis on independent research, thinking, and writing; and the daily lives of all Americans have become increasingly dependent upon reading—tax forms, instructions on medicine bottles, warnings on cans, travel directions, daily newspapers, checks, official communications from government agencies, even junk mail.

Gone are the days when the public library was simply the community's bookshelf. Today the public library is grappling with a whole new set of demands upon it—demands from students, from the increasing numbers of senior citizens, from adults seeking self-education, from people with reading disabilities, from the inmates of institutions, from people needing help with job information or career changes, from authors, journalists, and citizen activists. And the process has not stopped yet.

Public libraries are changing from passive repositories to active purveyors of information and knowledge to all those who need it.

This booklet describes recent developments in providing information services to people who are seeking employment or advancement or career changes. It focuses primarily on the work of job information centers in New York State, where

the idea was pioneered, based on a successful prototype established in the Yonkers Public Library. The lessons learned to date clearly have application and significance to public libraries throughout the country.

CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

Anna Wieland, thirty-nine, needed a job. The mother of three girls, she had been out of the job market for ten years and wanted to return to work. She was discouraged and disheartened. "Being out for all those years, I began to feel maybe there's nothing out there for me." Then one day, on her regular weekly visit to her public library, she saw a flyer announcing a workshop on "The ABC's of Job Hunting." The workshop, organized by the Job Information Center of the Yonkers Public Library, gave Mrs. Wieland useful tips on writing her résumé and how to conduct herself in an employment interview. Most of all, she said later, "It built up my confidence." A short while after completing the workshop, Mrs. Wieland landed just the job she wanted.

A Marine Corps Vietnam veteran, with a wife and two small children, was hospitalized for two years after suffering a nervous breakdown because of the strain of running his own business. He whiled away the days pursuing his favorite outside interest, American history. While still an outpatient at the Veterans Hospital, he turned to the Hempstead Public Library's Job Information Center for help in finding a new field he could work in with less stress. The librarian arranged for him to receive career counseling and testing at the library. Then through a referral from the Job Information Center he obtained a new job as a guide in one of the county's historical museums, where he could put his love of history to work. Today he is back with his family and all is well.

After working as a therapist for twenty-thrree years, a

Brooklyn woman wanted to become a full-fledged professional occupational therapist, for which one needed state certification. Her librarian suggested courses to supplement her career background in preparation for an upcoming state exam; recommended three schools in the area offering such classes; prepared a suggested reading list on the subject; and referred the applicant to the Civil Service Commission for more detailed information. With this help the candidate sailed through with flying colors.

In Massachusetts a young woman who had been unable to find work since she graduated with a certificate in teaching eight months earlier spent an hour picking out a new career on the computer terminal located in the Lawrence Public Library. The computer presented her with a questionnaire which evaluated what other kinds of work she might be suited for, then gave her a description of the background of the average person in fields that interested her, a description of what is done on a daily basis in those occupations, and a rundown on wage scales. It also gave her both statewide and regional forecasts of the numbers of jobs opening up in these fields. After she chose one of the new occupations, the computer listed schools in the Northeast where training in that occupation was offered and provided her with the name of the director, the tuition, entrance requirements, whether there was a placement service there, and information about financial aid. The computer then supplied her with a printout of the information to take home with her for future reference.

What all these people had in common was the shared experience of finding a broad range of valuable career and employment help through their local public libraries instead of spending time on disappointing visits to state employment offices and aimless scanning of want ads. Public Library Job Information Centers are still in their infancy, but their poten-

tial for providing what the country badly lacks—a national job information service program—is real and exciting.

The Beginnings

Americans began to feel the first ripple of the recent wave of high unemployment in 1971. In March of that year the national jobless rate for white-collar professional and technical workers reached the highest level (3.4 percent) since the statistic was first reported in 1958. In April the jobless rate for blacks shot to 10 percent, the highest rate in seven years. A lot of people who never knew what it was to hunt for a job were forced to do so, and were finding that hunt the toughest job they'd ever had. In the old Hudson River manufacturing city of Yonkers, which sprawls over the hills just north of New York City (and where, in 1854, E. G. Otis established his elevator works), the lines of people waiting at the New York State employment office to collect unemployment compensation and to look for hoped-for new jobs had never been longer. For many years Yonkers had been losing manufacturing jobs. Its 200,000 inhabitants were victims of the same decline that had been eating away at the state of New York since 1950. (Although employment in manufacturing rose nationally by 25 percent from 1947 to 1970, it declined 11 percent in New York State during the same period.)

Keith Drake was manpower commissioner of the city of Yonkers in the early seventies. During the course of his work for the city he had observed certain problems common to many job seekers: (1) They were not aware of all employment agencies operating in the city; (2) they were not aware of, or could not afford, local newspapers providing classified

opportunities; (3) they were not aware of the d
adequate job-hunting preparation, such as résum
had difficulty in regularly visiting all informa
while still actively job seeking; and (5) they felt
of resentment at having to report in to public or
cies, which called attention to their status as uner

From his office windows Drake looked down o
the Yonkers Public Library, a library he kne
top-notch reference department and an excellent
technology section. It occurred to him that the
had many of the information resources that
needed but that these resources were scattered
the library and therefore difficult to track down
self was not sure he could go to a card catalog
with a book on résumé writing, for example, with
the title or author. Why not, he wondered, pu
one place all the library's books on résumé wri
hunting, newspaper classified sections, announc
jobs in civil service and the armed forces, and w
information was useful to job seekers? As Dra
"This was taking a section of the library that t
ally never knew it had." Not only did the lib
have all those information sources, but it also
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when he walked into a public library. Further
brary was open after the usual hours of busine
state employment office and most other service
closed down.

The director of the Yonkers Public Library, C
liked Drake's proposal for a "job information c
library. They agreed that the New York State
Service should be asked to supply the library wi
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ederal, state,

and local—would save people trips, phone calls, and letters to those separate and scattered offices. The library would also post job listings from private agencies and from employers in Yonkers and would compile information about all the agencies serving job seekers. The library's new center would provide job seekers what Drake liked to call "one-stop shopping." With Drake's help, the library obtained a small grant in 1972 of $15,000 from the Office of Research and Development in the U. S. Department of Labor to establish an experimental Job Information Center (JIC). The Yonkers Public Library Job Information Center became the first center of its kind in any public library to bring together in one place such a wide variety of information concerning employment.

The Yonkers Public Library's primary objective was to simplify the problem of finding employment information for the growing numbers of unemployed and underemployed. The center was to act as a clearinghouse for information relating to job opportunities and the job-searching process. It was in no sense a placement agency.

The center was set up in a tiny but airy and cheerful space immediately to the right of the entrance to the old Carnegie building. Here a specially designed display panel was installed with a small desk and two chairs. Nancy Johmann, an enterprising young librarian who had arrived at Yonkers straight out of library school, was put in charge of the project. The center was staffed, by either a clerk or Ms. Johmann, during all the hours that the library was open. They provided assistance in using the various job-seeking tools to anyone who wanted it. In addition, much material was prominently displayed for people who preferred to help themselves or simply browse.

Johmann and her staff gathered information by telephone, by personal contact through mail surveys, and from published sources. She made a thorough bibliographic search to determine what kinds of printed materials were available on the relevant subjects in order to improve and enlarge her

collection. She subscribed, for example, to specialized newsletters and periodicals: *Affirmative Action Register*, a monthly national listing of jobs for female, minority, and handicapped persons; the *Chronicle for Higher Education*, a listing of a broad range of jobs in that field; and so on. The State Employment Service lent the library a microfiche reader until they were able to purchase their own. Each day a staff member picked up a microfiche copy of the job opportunities listed by the New York State Employment Service. These were "blind" listings. Anyone finding a job for which he or she wanted to apply was referred by the library to the state employment office, a few blocks away. Johmann developed a cooperative working relationship with nineteen nearby private employment agencies covering every imaginable area of employment—managerial, professional, clerical, administrative, and technical, as well as temporary jobs, jobs for the unskilled, and jobs for the handicapped. Job openings from local businesses were obtained and displayed on 3-by-5 cards tacked up on the center's bulletin boards. Job listings were updated weekly.

Each day classified help-wanted ads from all of the area's newspapers, in both Spanish and English, went on display. Also posted was an abstract of each civil service announcement. The abstract contained the name of the position, location, salary, number of vacancies, closing date of application, and the examination date. (The actual announcements were stored in loose-leaf binders and kept for one year.) The new Job Information Center compiled a card file of relevant agencies and organizations such as the Education Opportunities Center, Yonkers Career Center, Women's Center of Yonkers, the Employment Resource Center—organizations that have employment programs for special groups such as young adults, disadvantaged veterans, handicapped, retarded, senior citizens. Included on the cards were the name and address of the group, the telephone number, contact, and function of the group. Each entry in the file was

indexed in such a way that it was possible to locate all information about the topic at once.

Magazine and newspaper articles of special interest were copied and tacked up on bulletin boards. They eventually were stored in a file cabinet along with pamphlets, and government documents of interest to job seekers. These items, in addition to books and periodicals, were available for circulation as well as for use at the center.

Special publications produced by the job center were a natural spin-off. The first of these, "Your Job and Your Future," included a list of employment agencies in the area keyed to the types of positions in which each specialized, a particularly useful compilation, as it was the only verified list in print. The pamphlet also included an annotated bibliography of the center's books.

The grant from the Department of Labor also funded a publicity campaign. The campaign launched through TV, radio, newspapers, bus cards—and even an illuminated billboard in downtown Yonkers—had two aims: to explain the services and function of the center to potential users and to enlist the participation of community groups and businesses. The campaign brought into the center a much broader cross section of the population than customarily used the library.

The center was an immediate success. During its first fifteen months of operation the Yonkers Job Information Center served nearly 11,000 patrons and initiated almost 7,000 referrals to various employment-related agencies. Patrons went out of their way to tell Nancy Johmann and her staff that they never knew about most of the information provided by the JIC, or if they did know the information existed, they had not known where to find it.

The follow-up grant evaluation report concluded that "the overwhelmingly favorable response of both the business community and the patrons who used the Center proved that there is a definite need for clearinghouses such as the Job Information Center." The report also recommended that addi-

tional centers be created to close the information gap between job applicants and employers. The Yonkers Public Library itself decided to establish a permanent job information center to continue and further develop job information services.

In 1975, when the United States suffered from its worst economic slide since the Depression of the 1930s, the New York State Education Department suggested that libraries throughout the state open up centers similar to the prototype in Yonkers. Of inestimable value to the establishment of these new centers was the detailed report, including a procedures manual, written by Ms. Johmann in fulfillment of the grant requirements of the Department of Labor, which explained the various facets of operating the JIC. The manual contained such information as the history and objectives of the center; the duties of the personnel involved with the JIC; how to order, collect, organize, and circulate materials; and how to maintain records, statistics, and reports. The manual also provided a written record of what was actually done at the Yonkers Center. The State Education Department duplicated and distributed the report. The Yonkers staff participated in workshops for other libraries and gave their time and frank advice to all who asked. "Really was a splendid job on Yonkers part," says Dorothy Smith, coordinator for JICs in the State Division of Library Development. "None of this could have happened without them."

Today there are job information centers in more than half of the twenty-two library systems in the state.

Character of Service

Although there is a great similarity among the different job information centers, each also reflects the particular needs of

its own community. What works well in one area may be inappropriate in another. The character of service varies according to the dominant clientele of the individual library; the physical location of the library in the community; the center's location within the library itself; whether the center is staffed or is a self-help service; whether it is staffed by librarians or clerical help; and whether counseling and programming are provided.

The only aspect of the original Yonkers concept to prove unworkable was the attempt at solicitation and maintenance of job listings from employers and private employment agencies. As Grinton Will, director of Yonkers Library, pointed out, "It is a *personal* service rather than a *personnel* service. Job seekers, we found, didn't know how to read the bulletins of the State Employment Service, and did not know how to apply in person, in writing, or whatever was needed."

When the public library in the city of Mt. Vernon (population 72,778), serving an economically depressed and largely black community, opened its Job Information Center in 1977, it took a slightly broader view of the JIC than that taken by its neighbor in Yonkers. The Mt. Vernon staff brought together not only all books about résumé writing and the job-hunting process but also books dealing with vocational choice (*Careers in Health*, for example); a vocational pamphlet collection; all Arco exam titles and Barron exam titles (ranging from *Police Exam* to *How to Get into Medical School*); school information ranging from Adult Basic Education through technical schools and college and graduate schools; and small business and minority business materials. The staff at Mt. Vernon discovered that "job information was directly related to education, whether it involved learning to read, learning to speak English, or locating schools which offer training in respiratory therapy." They also felt that small business and minority business information was pertinent. Other librarians have followed this same logic in building their centers.

Mt. Vernon has found that a lot of upwardly mobile, low-income women—many of them in their thirties and forties and the sole support of their children—inquire at their Job Information Center about career opportunities. If a woman had decided on a certain career area—for example, the health field—she might then pose such broad questions as: What is needed to qualify? What is really done on the job? What kind of money can I make? Where can I get training free? Can I be paid to get training? To answer such questions, the staff at Mt. Vernon felt they needed a JIC with a broad range of materials.

The center at Mt. Vernon also received many young adults who had not finished high school and wanted to get their diplomas. They were looking for tutoring or night classes. Many students had trouble filling out applications and needed help. Standard operating procedure—if the library could not immediately come up with a good answer to a question—was to ask the person to leave his name and phone number so he or she could be phoned the information. Thus no one would leave disappointed or empty-handed.

Gloria Gerald, the Mt. Vernon JIC coordinator, comments, "I would have liked something like this to have been available when I was thinking about going to college. I don't think we ever went to our library. The only thing I came to the library for was Shakespeare." She praises the fact that not only are all the relevant books there at the JIC, "but you have people to sit down and explore the book with you." For example, she recently spent nearly two hours helping a prospective fireman go through a sample examination, question by question. "He hadn't taken an exam for many years and just needed to be reassured that he could do it," she explained. Gwen Hunter, the librarian in charge of the Mt. Vernon center, agrees: "I know our books and materials are extremely important but the human factor really counts. It's much more than information—it's support too. People are being constantly turned away. From their point of view they are in-

sulted and treated badly. At the library they a[re treated like human beings who are very special, and that tak[es time."

Rochester (population 296,233) is a city w[ith a concentration of high-technology industry (Eastman [Kodak, Xerox Corporation, Bausch & Lomb), which means th[at the city has more white-collar unemployment than some [other cities in New York State. (In great demand a[t the library's JIC, for example, is *Ad Search*, a weekly publication [listing nationwide upper-level positions.) These people ten[d to be fairly sophisticated library users and this is reflected [in the service provided by Rochester's JIC.

Rochester concentrates on collecting job-r[elated, work-related information only. The center includes i[n this description material on career change—women changi[ng careers, executives changing careers, older workers tryin[g to get back into a changing job market, and material on [small business. Although the JIC is a separate entity located i[n the lobby of the library, where it gets a busy flow of traffic [(the center is staffed at all times), it is actually a part of the b[usiness section of the library, where JIC users can be sent for [corporate annual reports, industrial and business directories [and so on. If people want information on schools, the cent[er has a very limited amount on hand, and people are usually [sent to the library's education section, where they can fin[d college catalogs, information about degree requirements, a[nd costs. The New York State job bank microfiche is kept in [the center and is so well used that the library has had to i[nstall a second microfiche reader. Help-wanted ads from Ro[chester papers and the Sunday New York *Times* are also ke[pt in the JIC. For ads in out-of-town papers, people are sent [to the periodical room, across the hall. "We're fairly central[to the type of information people want," explained Micca G[y, JIC librarian, "so we've not had to duplicate a lot of ot[er library material. And at the same time people get to kno[w various parts of the library, which is really the thing that yo[u want to have them do as well." The Rochester Center is a [resource that is

heavily used both by individuals and by other agencies in the city.

The Hempstead (population 39,411) Public Library on Long Island is a bright and cheerful, low, red brick structure situated on a greensward near the mayor's office, the police department, the labor department, the Chamber of Commerce, and other agencies with which the library coordinates its job information activities. Here the emphasis is very much on rendering personal assistance to the unemployed individual. Says Director Irene Duszkiewicz, "We knew from the onset of the project that what we wanted to provide was quality service. That it was better to provide nothing than to provide minimal, poor, turn-off service. For the people who come in, this is a last resort for them and they don't need to be shuffled off to another agency." The JIC is seen very much as an entry point to all the services of the library and the community. Thus, if a woman who comes in for job help is accompanied by her husband who is a functional illiterate, not only does she get her job information, but he is gently steered into the tutoring program of the local Literacy Volunteers of America (which also has its headquarters in the library). Jobless people who are unaware that they are entitled to government assistance programs, such as food stamps, are directed to the librarian in charge of social service information. Referrals to other community agencies are such an important component of the operation that the JIC is not staffed evenings and Saturdays because other agencies are closed during those hours.

Job information centers in more rural areas tend to service their patrons differently. There are fewer chances for jobs, fewer agencies to help job seekers. The collections of material are smaller. The centers tend to work more closely with the community. They are likely to have their own private job banks developed from contacts in the community. They have a far better feeling for referral than some of the large city JICs. They are able to be on a much closer basis with their

patrons and the people they are working with. For example, Leona Salzman, JIC librarian at Plattsburgh (population 26,000), in the northernmost part of the state, keeps an inventory of local businesses and industries—name, address, contact person. She does not look for specific job openings but instead keeps up to date on such things as the types of employment each business offers and the education or training required for the various jobs. Her referral files are dotted with notes like this one about a baking company: "Hires college students and recalls every year for busy summer months." Or a concrete products company: "Very little turnover, shut down in late fall. Only have skeleton crew for winter for repairing."

Staffing

Some job information centers are fully staffed by librarians; some are staffed by clerks (frequently these are paid for with temporary federal CETA funds); some JICs are unstaffed and are essentially self-help centers integrated into the reference department of the library.

At the Hempstead Public Library the director feels very strongly that it is important to have a professional librarian at the JIC desk. "Many of these people have never been inside a library and they don't realize what is in a library. To know both the library and the community is a must, and that takes at least six months on the job familiarizing herself with the county, the agencies, establishing the contacts." Hempstead thought for a long time about hiring someone from outside to handle the JIC, but, according to director Duszkiewicz, "We came to realize that in many respects the JIC librarian was the outreach librarian and if she doesn't know that the children's

librarian goes to PTAs and that we go to the nursing homes, that we really have a good contact over at women's services, and in-depth information about careers in commercial art are not in the JIC but in another part of the library, we miss a chance to put the full library at the disposal of the person seeking information at the Job Information Center. The patron is shortchanged and the library is shortchanged."

Another person who is cognizant of the importance of full-library backup to the centers is Dorothy Smith at the State Library in Albany, who is responsible for channeling LSCA funds into the job centers. "All sorts of people are suddenly discovering that there are JICs, but what they haven't yet discovered is that there is a whole big library behind every JIC and that it couldn't function without that library." A librarian behind the center desk offers greatest assurance that every resource of the library is used to its maximum.

But libraries function in less than ideal worlds. Federal funds made it possible for Hempstead to put librarians on their JIC desk full-time. Public libraries pinched for staff funds often feel compelled to hire less costly clerical staff to service their job centers.

Sometimes it is difficult to find librarians with the requisite empathy and communication skills to deal successfully with the wide range of people likely to be coming to a job center. This is a problem that reaches back to the library schools—the orientation of the students accepted at the schools and the training they receive. Gwen Hunter at the Mt. Vernon Center wanted someone on the desk "who had been unemployed, knew the whole rat race, knew that sympathy and listening are very helpful to people who've been tossed around. . . . Too many librarians," she feels, "are afraid to let themselves act like people."

She found the qualities she wanted in a quiet, middle-aged black man, a former computer technician who had been unemployed for over two years. He was given three months' training before he started helping people in the Job Informa-

tion Center—he visited the agencies to whom he would be referring people, he learned the resources of the center, and he learned about the card catalog.

Does Ms. Hunter feel she was able to train the JIC staff person to sufficiently understand the resources of the library? "No, we had to make it clear that the job falls within certain limits, and what you don't know you ask the other staff. In this library we all lean on each other a great deal . . . there's no reason to feel ashamed because you don't know something . . . he could see we rely on each other. If Fred couldn't find exactly what was perfect, he'd write it out and take it up with me. Sometimes I could come up with something better, sometimes I couldn't. Then it got to the point where *I* didn't know what was in the collection and he could show me." There would be no one staffing the JIC at Mt. Vernon if the library had not succeeded in obtaining CETA funds to pay for the position.

Libraries are not prevented from establishing job information centers even where they lack funds to staff them. Some have installed self-help JICs near their reference desks so that their existing staff can be available to answer questions. This works especially well in a small library. It is not a full answer —particularly in a library serving a sizable disadvantaged population, where personal attention is mandatory—but it is a good beginning. The simple act of pulling the material together in one place is a great help to any user. In addition, librarians are finding new ways to make the information both more visible and more accessible to the individual.

From lessons learned at the prototype Yonkers library, Nancy Johmann feels it is important to recognize that a JIC is indeed a departure from everyday routine, and therefore it must be made clear to the reference staff "that this is not a second-class service; that it is as important as checking out a book, it is as important as answering somebody's research question on some esoteric subject; that this is as bona fide a

use of the library as any other information request that the library receives."

When libraries are shorthanded, it is understandable that many reference staff members resist the additional burden of a job information center. Anticipating this problem, Martha Schmidt, the adult services librarian at Bethlehem Public Library Job Information Center (near Albany), made a special effort to make sure the entire library staff became aware of the JIC materials. She held staff meetings to give presentations about the concept of the Job Information Center and the kinds of services to be provided. She told the staff about the special programming for the center, asked them for ideas and for feedback, and most important, she bent over backward to give them any kind of help when they asked a question relating to the center. "They knew they had strong backup help and would not be left to flounder," Ms. Schmidt explains. In addition, the reference staff itself was increased.

The history of Bethlehem Public Library's JIC—probably the most active in the Albany District Area—demonstrates the evolutionary character of this kind of service. Not only is it possible to start as a small self-help operation, but there are certain distinct advantages to starting small and increasing service as demand warrants. Bethlehem introduced its Job Information Center in August 1976, after a year of increasing pressure for such information at the reference desk. Large numbers of people with employment-related questions had been asking for materials. They needed help on vocational decision-making; on continuing education; on how to go about finding a job; on how to write a résumé.

Bethlehem (population 26,000) is a comfortable, middle-class suburb of Albany, the state capital. It is very much a bedroom community for government officeholders. In 1975, when the governor cut back on state government jobs, large numbers of civil service employees were thrown out of work and many others felt threatened enough to plan changing careers altogether. There were a number of colleges in the area

turning out students with B.A.'s who were finding no employment in the area. Teachers were losing jobs as school districts suffered declining enrollments and schools closed down. Many of these former teachers, tied to the area because of their marriages, were looking for alternative jobs. Like most affluent suburbs, the divorce rate in Bethlehem was climbing and divorced women were interested in seeking careers.

The library started to help these people by putting two study carrels together near the reference desk, pulling out of the adult collection career-related materials, Xeroxing articles in magazines on job hunting and résumé writing, and putting a bulletin board beside the carrels on which to display the information. "It was immediately apparent that it was inadequate," explains Martha Schmidt. "We didn't have enough material. There were too many questions we couldn't answer."

At that point, Bethlehem Public asked its library system to include the library in the component of the Library Services and Construction Act grant that was funding JICs in two other libraries in the system. The system agreed to supply Bethlehem with a microfiche reader so it could get the New York State Employment Service daily listing of jobs on microfiche (thus saving users a trip to Albany) but no additional funds could be made available. The Bethlehem Public Library went ahead and financed all staffing and material itself. The library was soon able to spend $2,500 a year on resources for the center, about half of it federal government monies.

Two months after setting up the two carrels and the bulletin board adjacent to the reference desk the traffic congestion had become so great, says Ms. Schmidt, "that we had to relocate so that it was out of the heavy traffic area and could be expanded to supply increased seating . . . but still we had to have the reference staff give the help." In early 1977 Carol Desch, a young librarian straight out of library school, was hired with temporary CETA funds. She was primarily re-

sponsible for the development of the JIC collection and the center's very successful programs. But the reference desk staff continued to provide service to JIC users. The next logical step was to have Carol Desch added to the permanent staff and off temporary CETA funding.

The Bethlehem Public Library's Board of Trustees had resisted any expanding of the JIC. They were committed to the library remaining small and felt a job information center was too sophisticated a service for the area. Martha Schmidt requested permission for Carol Desch and herself to make a presentation to the board members. "We put together a slide presentation, discussed it with them . . . and we got their support. This year they agreed to put another professional position in the budget and it was approved. Carol Desch is now on salary, and the reason she is on salary is that the response to the JIC was so visible—the number of people coming in, word of mouth around the community, the number of people we've had attend the programs we've offered."

Because of the growing demand, the Bethlehem JIC was again expanded in the fall of 1978 and moved to a larger space with room for a separate inquiry desk (staffed with LSCA funds from nine to five every day by a clerical person), with Carol Desch the principle resource librarian. A new CETA librarian has also been assigned to work with the JIC. Bethlehem's next goal is to staff the JIC during the library's peak traffic hours—evenings and weekends.

The Bethlehem information service is now called a Career and Education Resource Center. Like most libraries that have had experience with JICs, Bethlehem finds that job information and education information are so closely tied together—most adults seeking education are doing so for job-related reasons—that it will need to pull its college catalogs and other information about educational opportunities together with job-related materials.

Martha Schmidt describes Bethlehem's success in expanding its library service to the community this way: "Get a

service out there. Get people asking for it and using it. Then you can demonstrate the need to have more manpower to develop it. That's what we did with the JIC, and that's what we will keep on doing."

The Problem of Money

The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library suffered a 42 percent cut in personnel in 1977, forcing a curtailment of many services and the elimination of others. Although LSCA funds ensured a continuation of the library's job information service, the general budget cutbacks meant that because of her lack of civil service seniority, Ann Marbach, the enterprising young librarian in charge (who had instituted a series of noontime job forums widely copied by other libraries), lost her job. Her successor had the same experience a few months later when further staff reductions were made. As a result, the JIC position at Buffalo was held by three different librarians within a five-month period, with all the attendant disruption and loss of continuity.

It takes as much as a year to become well trained in education and career literature. Not only must the librarian in charge develop expertise as a subject specialist, but, in addition, time must be invested in becoming familiar with the strength and weaknesses of the community's various social service agencies. The JIC librarian must also develop basic interviewing techniques.

The original JIC at Yonkers has been repeatedly crippled by staff cutbacks as well. Nancy Johmann, the young librarian who so successfully developed that prototype program, was forced to leave because of budget cutbacks. Although the Yonkers JIC continues to be run by a CETA clerk, because

the center is physically so far removed from the reference desk, the lack of a full-time librarian is a severe handicap to effective service.

Gwen Hunter, the reference librarian in charge of the center at Mt. Vernon, was shocked to discover in the summer of 1978—just eight months after the center had opened to the public—that she would, in all likelihood, be unable to have the desk staffed after November 1 because the CETA funding for staff was in jeopardy. As a result, the referral files she and her staff had so painstakingly built up over the preceding months—information essential to an effective job information service in a high unemployment area—would soon become obsolete because of the inability to keep it current.

The establishment of essential community information services (like JICs) can provide a powerful weapon in the battle for funds. More and more librarians faced with budget cuts are beginning to recognize, in the words of one adult services consultant, that "they can't retrench, because they will slowly just wither up and die." A librarian faced with a budget crisis simply has to be more aggressive in pointing out the importance of continuing public library services. "There are needed services that can be heavily emphasized, such as job information centers and literacy training, which are sellers. You can go to a town council with a job information center a lot more easily than you can with twenty new reference books."

Self-help for JIC Users

Ease of access to materials is obviously of paramount importance to the success of a self-help JIC, and that means that emphasis must be placed on making the JIC area as well

defined, as visible, and as browsable as possible. This requires strong graphics, well-labeled display boards, and comfortable seating. Most important is that the job center be located where it is readily visible from the entrance to the library.

Self-help is an important feature of the successful job information center. For some people, asking for information can be a painful process. Others simply prefer to find things out for themselves. Libraries operating job information centers have compiled an array of materials to help patrons gain access to the information they need on their own.

Rochester has approached the problem by printing a series of brightly colored bookmarks. One, designed to help people interested in starting their own business, lists half a dozen recommended books in the field along with their JIC call numbers; another lists the broad categories of information to be found in the JIC (Writing Résumés; Job Listings; Application Procedures; Interviewing Techniques; Small Businesses; Company Information; Civil Service; Overseas Employment; Employment Agencies; and Acquiring New Skills). Other bookmarks supply basic information on such topics as "What is a job résumé?" and "What is Civil Service?".

A number of job information centers have put together booklets that serve as a means both of describing the JIC service and of giving the job hunter a handle for getting started in the use of material in the JIC. The sixteen-page booklet prepared by Brooklyn Public Library JIC staff entitled "Searching for a Job?" introduces the job hunter to the information available at the center via a sample listing of subject files, a list of newspapers to be found at the JIC, and an annotated list of magazines and directories of particular interest to job hunters. It also gives basic information about New York State Employment Service; Neighborhood Manpower Centers; unemployment benefits; Social Security; working papers; and civil service information. Many such booklets in-

clude a bibliography of job- and career-related materials, including films, that are available at the JIC.

The Rochester booklet introducing its center has organized samplings of the kinds of materials it has available under the headings: Company Information; Other Employment Information; Job Hunting; Job Openings; Improving Skills; Vocational Information; Studying for Exams; Public Employment Agencies; Careers; Special Classes of Workers; and Small Business.

Some libraries pull together "job survival kits." These consist of a small sheaf of 8½-by-11 mimeographed pages—one page explains what makes a good résumé, what makes a bad résumé; another page outlines a sample résumé; additional pages explain what is meant by apprenticeship, itemize points to remember for making the most of your job interview, give tips to veterans, and detail information about state unemployment insurance.

The Hempstead Public Library provides a job survival kit containing "pointers in writing a covering letter" and supplies a sample cover letter, a sample direct-mail letter, tips on how to conduct an interview, examples of various résumé formats, and tips about how to compile a good résumé.

The Bethlehem Public Library has prepared a sheet on "Job Hunting Tips for Teenagers" and another on "Teenage Job Ideas" with suggested positions ranging from baby-sitter to volunteer candy striper at the local hospital.

People with special problems—ex-offenders, alcoholics, drug addicts—are frequently the most desperate for jobs but the least likely to ask for information. Jacquelyn Thresher, adult services consultant with the Westchester Library System (a system with ten self-help JICs), is seeking ways to make information more freely accessible to these people. Methods include flip panel bulletin boards with information about agencies that help people with special problems

find jobs, and a Rolodex self-help index to agencies that permit people to get information without a librarian's help. An ex-offender is preparing, for the Westchester Library System, a directory for ex-offenders, a "survival guide to the outside," which will contain a section on unemployment.

Other examples of resources librarians have compiled themselves to help their JIC patrons include:

1. Bibliographies of the center's collection
2. Videotapes that give an orientation to the center
3. Videotapes of mock interviews done by career counselors from a nearby college
4. Notebooks containing copies of application forms from local businesses, industries, restaurants, etc., so that patrons may become familiar with what information is required when applying for a job
5. Listings of the library's periodicals that contain classified advertisements, organized by occupation (an extremely useful tool)
6. Occupational guides to the area's public and private employment agencies along with some need-to-know tips about using private agencies
7. Lists of headings to check in the card catalog for further information
8. Notices on bulletin boards suggesting users ask librarians for copies of special magazines like *Occupations in Demand*, *Careerism Newsletter*, *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*
9. Information (from Chambers of Commerce, state labor departments, newspapers, etc.) about employment prospects in out-of-state cities with low unemployment
10. Notebooks arranged according to names of industries and companies, containing articles taken primarily from area newspapers, which provide an overview of local employment possibilities and trends

All of these materials are designed to help "browsers" at the JIC find as much information as they can on their own, without requiring staff time.

Working with Other Agencies

Being the coordinator of a job information center plunges the librarian into constant contact with members of other agencies in the community. "Those that succeed have to work closely with other agencies. They can't do the job alone," emphasizes Dorothy Smith, JIC coordinator with the New York State Library.

That means, first of all, establishing a good relationship with the State Employment Service, the primary source for job listings in any community. When Bethlehem Public Library started its JIC in 1976, explains Martha Schmidt, "I began by going down every day to Albany [a thirty-minute round trip], picking up the fiche myself, and meeting the man who directs the Albany New York State Employment Service. We got along beautifully." When she could no longer do it herself, she sent another librarian to follow in her footsteps. The payoff came when the Albany Employment Service made plans recently to set up five experimental satellite interviewing stations in different locations. Bethlehem Public Library was the only library chosen as a possible site. The others were to be town halls.

In Rochester the New York State Employment Service was at first skeptical about placing its job fiche in the center. Employment Service staff were concerned that the library was taking over something that was their function. Once they understood the library's information-only role, they were willing to cooperate. Today the Employment Service is a strong supporter of the Rochester Center. The library has ex-

panded its job bank collection to include listing for Buffalo and Syracuse, the nearest large cities, and has added another microfiche reader to accommodate demand.

A few libraries have found it impossible to wi the cooperation of the local state employment office. In par the impasse doubtless arises because of the problem of persu ding the employment service that what the library offers m erely supplements and does not compete with the employme t service.

Some local branches of state employment off es are eager to place their job bank fiche in public libraries a d have even initiated the service themselves. They believe l braries to be desirable sites on the theory that a wider net cat hes more job seekers. "But it is only useful," according to ne manager, "for people who are 'job ready'—people wh understand what they can do, and have some understand ng as to the qualifications called for in the jobs they are seek ng."

In the economically troubled city of Mt. Vernon, the unemployed are mostly black, many of them lo -skilled. Mt. Vernon's Job Information Center has therefore established a strong referral component. It maintains close working relationships with such agencies as the Urban Leag e, the Youth Employment Service, the Community Action C roup, and the Recruitment and Training Program (an organ ation funded by the A. Philip Randolph Foundation, which ts as a liaison between unions and minorities), to name but a ew of the involved agencies in the immediate area. These c ntacts are of paramount importance for any JIC in a com ex, industrial area with a sizable unskilled or semiskilled labor market. Most adults are not well informed about agencies o fering job or career help in their communities—particula ly the least skilled, who are far more dependent on publi employment services tailored to their special needs than a e the general population of job seekers.

Strong links with community agencies had b en established in the sixties by the Mt. Vernon Public Libra y through its outreach programs, which include a well-publi zed and well-

utilized literacy program. As a result, the library was already well known to the black and Hispanic communities as a friendly, helpful place with information about almost everything. "I've never seen so many minority people using a library," commented one knowledgeable observer about Mt. Vernon's public library patrons.

The reference librarian in charge of Mt. Vernon's Job Information Center has been with the library ten years and served as community services librarian for a good many of those years. "As soon as we started the Job Information Center we went out to all the agencies involved with employment," Gwen Hunter recalls. "You have to dig to find out what these agencies are offering. Someone will be sitting on top of great programs and crying because the local newspaper hasn't picked it up, or the Chamber of Commerce hasn't picked it up, unaware that not only does a program have to be good but you also have to *broadcast* it."

The Yonkers experience was similar. Both community and private groups eagerly cooperated with the library because they recognized that their most pressing problem was making people aware of their existence so they could provide help.

Some fourteen agencies involved with jobs in Mt. Vernon began meeting on a monthly basis in the spring of 1978 in an effort to fashion a central clearinghouse for job information in the community, which could then be tapped by the library's JIC and others. A similar coordination and communication effort exists in Niagara Falls, and has produced a close working relationship with Niagara County Community College, which provides career counselors for the public library's JIC and discussion leaders for job forums.

Hempstead Public Library also works hard to ensure successful referrals to other agencies. People referred to an agency by the JIC are given the names of particular individuals with whom the library has an established relationship. These relationships require nurturing and constant updating because of the high rate of turnover, particularly in county

agencies. According to Hempstead's director, "You call one day and the next day they're not there, sometimes the office itself is not there, so you have to be constantly calling to be sure you don't refer somebody to an empty storefront."

Jacquelyn Thresher, adult services consultant for the Westchester Library System, thinks that librarians who make referrals should also let agency directors know about bad experiences their clients have had at the agencies. She feels librarians have been far too meek: "We are part of the same political process and we shouldn't take on other public services in open combat—but I think you can let them know in a perfectly professional way that your clients didn't get what they needed. It's important for the librarian to be specific: 'We sent over these five people and this is what happened to them. . . .' Libraries have never been big on documentation, but that's what it takes to do an effective job."

Forging links with other community agencies has the added advantage of making the library more visible to agency personnel and stimulating them to think of ways to use the JIC. The job center at Monroe County Public Library in Rochester has gained recognition from a wide variety of agencies which take groups to the center for tours and programs, consult the center's collection to learn about materials useful to their own operations, and refer individual clients to the center. These agencies bring people into job information centers who might otherwise never find their way to the library. A group called Action for a Better Community recently brought a dozen black teenagers from a public housing project into Rochester's JIC. They were participants in a career-related program, and each youth was assigned a set of questions about a specific career requiring him or her to use the information resources of the center. The experience was designed to reinforce in their minds the procedure the youths would need to follow in order to find that kind of information for themselves.

A special program of the Rochester Department of Social

Services, designed to motivate welfare recipients to get back into the job market, combines tours of the JIC and use of some of the library's job-related audiovisual materials. Similar use of other JICs has frequently been made by agencies that work with people who have physical and mental disabilities. Thus the job information center becomes a means of introducing the library as a friendly, practical, useful place to people who are very largely outside the mainstream of American life and who would be unlikely ever to make use of a public library.

In addition, reports Micca Gray of Rochester's center, "agencies come down to see what types of materials we have purchased and which ones we would recommend for their type of setup." Although there are growing numbers of career-oriented agencies in the area, according to Ms. Gray, they can afford neither space nor money to duplicate what the library has to offer and therefore usually acquire only the more basic information. For the most part, these agencies serve a smaller section of the population—students or adults in continuing education—and do not need everything the library has. Furthermore, Ms. Gray adds, "They're not information specialists, they tend to rely on us for that."

Helping other agencies working in the job-finding, job-development field becomes a natural spin-off for a job information center. When the Hempstead JIC staff learned about the Job Crisis Unit at a nearby hospital (a staff member saw an advertisement for it in a local supermarket), they called the unit to see how they could help. They discovered two young CETA counselors trying to find employment for outpatients who were coming to the hospital for a variety of disabilities. They had a very small office and almost no budget. The library lent them books and information resources, gave them multiple copies of the Job Survival Kits to hand out, advised them on which books would be most useful for them to have, and encouraged them to use the library's information and referral files. A number of hospitals

in Nassau County now have job crisis units, and the JIC coordinator attends their meetings to lend her expertise. By pursuing this kind of energetic librarianship the circle of people who use the library inevitably widens.

Because the JIC librarian has become an expert in a vitally important field, he or she is constantly invited to participate in community programs. Micca Gray was teamed up with a business representative to discuss job resources/job hunting in a careers program put on by a settlement house in Rochester. In Plattsburgh the Center staff joined a career information forum put on by the local community college. In Bethlehem, where the high schools have a strong career counseling program, the JIC librarian, Carol Desch, has been invited to talk to seniors about the resources available at the JIC.

Probably there is no more effective way to bring the public library into the center of community life and to change the stereotyped image of the public library as "just a place for books" than by providing a special reference service like job and career information. Equally significant, the demands made of the JIC librarian serve to change the way he or she functions. The JIC librarian must keep up to date in the field, must work with other community agencies, must be able to help people from all walks of life. The combination of client need and the librarian's growing experience stimulates the ability to give more in-depth information and a more energetic service than has been customary in public library reference service.

Programming

"What has really developed our job information center has been programming—it's our most effective way of advertising," says Martha Schmidt of Bethlehem Public Library.

"People come to our workshops, learn about the JIC and what it can do for them, and then come back again and again to explore the materials." Most of New York's JICs have been very active in their programming.

Typical of the kinds of workshops offered are these from the Niagara Falls Public Library:

1. An Employment Forum on "Current Future Job Outlooks" with speakers from the New York State Job Service–Job Bank, New York State Civil Service Department, Federal Job Information Center, and the Niagara County Civil Service, a private employment agency.
2. An Interview Forum in conjunction with the Niagara County Community College Career Counselors, with mock interviews by counselors followed by audience participation on the pros and cons of interviewing techniques.
3. A Job Forum with two personnel specialists from major industries in the area to speak on résumé writing and interviewing, and a career counselor from the Career Search Center at the community college to speak on job searching.

All of the foregoing forums were videotaped by the library for use by other libraries in the same system and by members of the public.

Some public libraries also used videotaping equipment in their workshops on interviewing, to put people through test interviews while "on camera." The results were extremely successful. Participants were able to evaluate their own performance in an interview situation as the tapes were replayed.

Buffalo Public Library is located in the heart of downtown. In the library's excellent auditorium the library staff inaugurated a series of noontime forums exactly forty-five minutes long so people on their lunch hour would have time to get there, eat a sandwich, and return to work. People came by the hundreds and many stayed over to ask questions. The

noontime forum idea has since been picked up by a number of other libraries.

JIC librarians have learned that many underemployed people give serious thought to self-employment as an alternative and look for information on establishing and operating small businesses. Several have brought in personnel from the New York State Department of Commerce and the Small Business Administration to conduct forums expressly on that subject.

One of Hempstead's best attended workshops—130 people—was on "The Joys . . . and Pitfalls of Starting Your Own Business." This program was cosponsored by the town's Department of Industry and Commerce and the Long Island Office of the State Department of Commerce. Some of the topics covered were researching the need for a business; choosing a location; financing; necessary licenses or permits; insurance; advertising; franchising; and types of businesses that can be run from the home.

Hempstead has responded to the needs of teenagers through two springtime workshops: one for baby-sitters, conducted by the 4-H Division of the Cooperative Extension Service; the other, "Summer Job Fever," put on by the National Alliance of Minority Businessmen, designed to help fourteen-to-twenty-year-olds with interviewing techniques, filling out job applications, and general guidelines for job hunting.

Westchester County Library System has been developing programs designed primarily to attract male participants. (Women, returning to school or work, originally proved to be their primary market.) They have had some programs run by SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), and have sought ideas from the head of a job development center at a nearby university and private executive consultants.

In order to extend job information programs to the residents of Westchester communities in which the libraries have been unable to establish JICs—primarily due to size and limited resources—the county library system is offering "pre-

packaged" road shows, including career-life planni[ng work-
shops, job search skills workshops, and peer sup[port for
women contemplating entry into the labor force.

Bethlehem Public Library has discovered that [the most
effective programming sequence is a series of three [or four
programs all tied together by title. The staff finds t[his gives
more publicity and seems to stay with people more [than sin-
gle programs do. Even before Bethlehem started the[ir JIC in
1975, the staff offered a two-part workshop on job [hunting.
Over seventy people attended and there were so m[any re-
quests from people who missed it that the library rep[eated the
program. Since then Bethlehem has regularly offered [an eve-
ning job series twice a year—spring and fall. Each s[eries usu-
ally consists of four sessions, scheduled for consecuti[ve Tues-
days, Wednesdays, or Thursdays.

The first session of the Bethlehem workshop [series is
devoted to self-evaluation and career assessment. Spe[akers for
this workshop are usually representatives of local c[areer and
educational counseling firms. It has been the library's experi-
ence that these firms are happy to provide speakers [free be-
cause it is good public relations.

Sessions 2 and 3 cover the what, when, and [why of
résumés, followed by individual résumé critiques. [The li-
brary pays a fee to the placement officer of a local c[ollege to
conduct the sessions. These sessions usually draw mo[re people
than either of the others. (Martha Schmidt's comm[ent that
"helping on résumés is the greatest need that we pe[ceive in
the career area" is echoed by almost all JICs.) The fo[urth ses-
sion wraps it all up, talking about elements of the j[ob inter-
view and the condition of the local job market. The [panel for
this workshop consists of personnel officers of loc[al firms,
and representatives of private and public employm[ent serv-
ices. These speakers are also free.

Martha Schmidt and Carol Desch have learned fr[om their
workshop experience at Bethlehem that people w[ant in-
depth, individualized attention. In the fall of 1978 th[y began

conducting their own Career and Life Planning Workshops—taking sixteen people at a time through self-evaluation, skills assessment, résumé writing, and job-hunting techniques, and relating those skills to the world of work. Startling to find librarians themselves running those workshops? Not really, when one stops to realize the expertise these librarians have developed.

Counseling

Most job information centers have become aware of a strong public demand for career counseling. "Generally our patrons are appalled at the prices private services charge," reported the New York Public Library JIC in 1977. "The philanthropic organizations which have sliding fees are inundated and there are weeks of waiting to use them." In some communities the only counseling services to be found are tied to educational institutions and therefore lack impartiality.

Libraries have made a variety of arrangements to provide free counseling to their clients. The Upper Hudson Library Federation, of which Bethlehem is a part, contracted with a professional guidance counselor to provide counseling in three of its member libraries six days a week, with, in the words of federation director Edgar Tompkins, "resounding success." Bethlehem and the other federation libraries that offer this service report the demand is so great that the counselor is fully booked one and two months in advance. The service has been particularly sought by women wanting to reenter the job market.

Hempstead made arrangements with the Nassau County Office of Women's Services to provide free counseling at the library by appointment. Career counselors from the Niagara

County Community College provide service at the Niagara Falls library's JIC on a regular basis.

Job information center librarians are troubled when they are only able to provide raw information to job seekers. At a special meeting of representatives of job information centers throughout New York State in 1977, several expressed frustration at not being able to do more for their patrons, particularly when a patron has little or no idea as to what career he or she would like to pursue. A growing movement within the library profession holds that librarians should receive significant training at library school in advising and counseling.

The Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh has been pioneering with nearly a dozen courses in communication services. A counseling psychologist, Dr. Sara Fine, is now included as a full-time faculty member at the school. In the winter of 1978 Dr. Fine conducted a three-week continuing education institute for twenty-five professional librarians on career collection development and counseling. The institute was designed "to develop the basic skills for making career information freely available to all citizens in a community, to make explicit the role of the library and information professionals in accomplishing this task, and to provide the skills necessary to develop career-resource centers in the participants' own libraries and library systems."

Plainly such instruction is sorely needed and should be expanded.

Publicity

Programs and counseling services clearly are successful ways of acquainting people with the public library as a vital com-

munity resource. But these services must in turn be well advertised if they are to attract people who need them. Bethlehem Public Library sends publicity releases about its programs to all news outlets, including radio and television stations, local newspapers, and community organizations. Flyers or posters are placed in strategic locations in the area and an announcement is made in the library's monthly newsletter. By querying program participants, Bethlehem has learned that its own newsletter (available only for pickup at the library) and the local weekly newspaper have been its most effective media. Bethlehem plans a quarterly mailing to all residents which will include publicity on JIC programs. A survey of people in career transition recently conducted by the College Entrance Examination Board discovered that an overwhelmingly large percentage of people felt that "the ideal career center would inform adults of the availability of those services through mailing to households in the community." This is consistent with the success many public libraries have had in rural areas by advertising special services in "pennysavers" which are delivered to every household. Bus cards and posters have been successful in attracting patrons to urban libraries. Some JICs have also used ads in the help-wanted sections of local daily papers, as well as TV and radio spots. Local newspapers, radio and TV programs have shown considerable interest in covering job information centers because they are a more visible service with greater human interest appeal than a shelf of books.

The Yonkers Public Library noted a direct correlation between the number of patrons who used the center during a specified period of time and the corresponding volume of public relations activity during the same period. As the amount of publicity increased, the number of patrons increased. According to its report to the Department of Labor, "In June of 1972 many contacts were made and a billboard advertising the JIC appeared in the downtown Yonkers area. During the three month period December through February, there was a 24 percent increase in the number of patrons who

used the Center, over the number of patrons who used the Center during the first six months of the project. This significant increase was attributed to the use of more posters, radio announcements, and TV coverage; to the completion of the construction of the Center; to the fact that many patrons had recommended the Center to other patrons. The number of patrons who used the Center over the next four months, from March to June, showed a 21 percent increase over the number of patrons who used the Center during the first nine months of the project. Additional publicity in the form of radio and TV spot announcements was again responsible for the increase."

Some job information centers have developed slide display units for use at community group functions. Niagara Falls worked with a member of their Friends of the Library to organize a meeting with community leaders to encourage more coordinated activity and to publicize their new JIC. Another library distributed JIC brochures which brought good response from community agencies and organizations, as well as an increased response from individual library patrons.

Some libraries are gun-shy about publicizing their job information centers because they are already so busy. But such libraries are usually only reaching traditional library users. Without special publicity aimed at every segment of their communities, public libraries are not only missing the opportunity of attracting a broad range of new patrons to the library but also derelict in their obligation to serve the public—*all* of the public.

Evaluation

Regrettably very little evaluation of job information services is available. The centers that receives LSCA funds—and this means the great majority of them—are required to file an an-

nual narrative report, but there is no standard reporting procedure, no prescribed system for collecting data, and no established evaluative criteria.

Lack of evaluation hampers JIC service in libraries in two major ways: It limits the ability of the administration to keep the service flexible and responsive to user needs in terms of materials, hours, information, and special services provided. And, second, it is impossible to assess whether the project is meeting the goals set for it. Without the ability to make informed judgments based on hard facts, library administrators and trustees are at a disadvantage in arriving at budget obligations or seeking special help from funding agencies.

The prototype JIC at Yonkers did keep a careful count of the number of its users. Fifty thousand people used the center in the first five and a half years of service. Little else is known about the results or value of the service given. "The statistics were high but the results were hard to pin down," observes Keith Drake. One problem in collecting data for evaluation stems from the librarian's traditional respect for the privacy of their clients. Job information center users in particular, many librarians feel, are embarrassed by their unemployment status and wish to use the center anonymously.

Yonkers, Rochester, and some other libraries have attempted to obtain feedback from users of their JIC service by asking them to voluntarily fill in questionnaires. The Rochester questionnaire asked people where they heard about the JIC, what type of information they needed, their age group and employment status, whether they found what they needed, and whether they had suggestions. Despite a strong effort on the part of the staff to encourage people to fill the questionnaire out, returns have been disappointingly small and the results inconclusive.

The more personalized nature of the service at a public library like Hempstead's JIC allows greater opportunity to collect data for evaluation purposes. People coming to the desk at the center are asked for their name, address, phone number, type of work they are looking for, educational back-

ground, and so on. Contrary to what might be expected, people seem to enjoy giving this information. The library has learned from this data that the great majority of its users are between eighteen and thirty-four, are unemployed rather than underemployed, are college graduates or have had some college training, and are fairly evenly divided between men and women. The library also knows that it is reaching relatively few people who have less than a high school education.

Once they have this data, the library staff can then take a further step toward evaluation. A month after a person visits the Hempstead center, he or she is sent a card asking for follow-up information. For the period ending June 30, 1978, the overall percentage of returns was very high, almost one-quarter. Of this group, 22 percent had found employment directly with the aid of the center and 93 percent said the information they received was helpful in their job search. Eighty-three percent of the respondents said that they found the published material helpful, 88 percent of these people specifically identifying newspapers, 82 percent the daily job bank microfiche, 64 percent books. An analysis of this kind of information in conjunction with a knowledge of the demographic makeup of the community enables the library to intelligently plan its publicity, service, and programs.

An Urgently Needed Service

Job information centers have been immensely popular with the public. The prototype center at Yonkers attracted 5,000 users during its first year of operation. Rochester attracted 5,589 people to its JIC during its first four months of operation—97 people turned up on a single December day. Rochester users now number about 1,200 a month; in Hempstead about 300 a month. (These counts are not truly

comparable since the counts are kept only du
center is staffed. The center in Hempstead is no
nings and weekends, while Rochester's is staff
hours the library is open.) In Troy up to 80 pe
JIC each week during its first two months
Plattsburgh, in its second year of operation, m
bled its rate of usage, serving 1,559 patrons in
months of 1978. Libraries that record statistic
steady increase in the use of JIC services.

Some libraries with JICs have been particular
the broader base of citizens who make use of t
The New York Public Library has noted an in
number of black library users; Ilion, a small in
near Utica, reports use of JIC materials by
number of young blue-collar workers. Most ce
port an increase in use by persons over the age o

The job information center has gone far bey
nal goals Keith Drake had in mind when he pu
concept to the Yonkers Public Library in 197
primarily in terms of helping people who w
thrown out of work because of a troubled econ
reason, he believed that job centers were needed
of high unemployment. In practice, job inform
are serving not only the newly unemployed but
additional categories of people as well:

1. In the first category are midlife women who
tering or reentering the labor market in such
they now make up half the entire labor force.
need guidance, support, and retraining.

2. Another significant group, largely unrec
relatively recently, are the millions of peopl
ployed but who are considering a change in ca
estimate that the average working American c
three to five times in his lifetime.

3. Finally, the centers are patronized by re
of school and college who are looking for their

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As a result of experiences with these groups, it has become clear that the value of job information centers is not simply in providing service to areas of high unemployment, but in providing service to any working community.

A recently completed study by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) entitled "Forty Million Americans in Career Transition: The Need for Information" sheds considerable light on reasons why the job information centers have been so successful. The number of adults "in transition" —defined by the study as adults aged sixteen to sixty-five and not in school full-time—is vast. *More than one third of all adults* are making, or anticipating, job or career changes at any given point in time. In-transition adults are predominantly female, white, between twenty and thirty-nine years of age, typically married with one to three children living in the household, and with family incomes of $10,000 a year or more. Most adults in transition are presently employed and wish either to change fields or to change their level or status in their present fields, primarily because of financial need, but also because of a desire to seek more interesting work and to advance professionally. Most of them seek additional education in order to achieve their goals.

These 40 million Americans want career services of all kinds, but the CEEB found they are most interested in access to specific information on jobs, careers, and educational opportunities. According to the report, "Adults express high interest in forms of assistance which expand their knowledge and awareness of available jobs or career options. When given the choice as to what kind of help they wanted with a particular topic, adults preferred information to guidance, counseling, or training." Over 50 percent of the adults in transition singled out two services as being of high interest: lists of available jobs, and facts about career fields. It is, of course, just these information services that library job centers provide.

The CEEB survey also found that "those adults with the

least education, and adults who are black, express a higher interest in services which involve personal, problem-directed counseling than do better educated or white adults." This finding reinforces the wisdom of providing personal, individual attention to patrons in libraries like Mt. Vernon and Yonkers, which serve many black and Hispanic patrons who have received inadequate basic skill preparation and education.

Another major finding of the CEEB study—that "most in-transition adults do not know about agencies offering job or career help in their communities"—supports one of the primary reasons for the establishment of JICs in libraries. Libraries are central facilities in most communities and therefore the logical place to seek information of all kinds. The important thing is to ensure that the required information is available, and the community is made aware of that fact.

The CEEB team expects the in-transition population to increase as a result of the continued lowering of sex and race barriers, as well as the elimination of other artificial barriers to employment, including educational and credential requirements not related to job performance. As this in-transition population increases, the need for job information centers can be expected to increase accordingly.

A Vital Public Service

There is hardly a community in America that does not have residents who are facing problems of unemployment or underemployment, the challenge of career selection, or career change. Jobs are a "gut" issue. They affect the survival of a community.

Where job information centers have been set up to serve

these citizens, they have been extremely popular with library staff and trustees. A job information center does not require a major commitment of funds, does not require a weighty shift of priorities, and does not require a basic change for librarians. A JIC is simply a special reference service, a concentration of effort in one reference topic.

A JIC can begin small. A library can establish a job information center just by pulling together relevant existing resources and concentrating some thought as to how to enchance the usefulness and accessibility of that information to the public. When changes in service do become necessary to meet user demand, they can evolve naturally. As the librarians gain knowledge of the materials and become more fully aware of what else people want and need, the library can offer more in-depth service in response to public demand.

In a sense, a job information center is a form of outreach service. But unlike some of the poverty programs of the sixties, which tended to emphasize service to one group over others, it is a service that cuts across all age, ethnic, and income groups. With rare exception, everyone needs career and job information.

Because a job information center converts existing library resources formerly known to only a knowledgeable few into something from which everybody can benefit, a whole new constituency is attracted to the library. People in the community discover that the library can be "unlocked," that it is not just a "storehouse for books," but can be put to practical advantage.

A job information center also transports the librarian outside the walls of the library into the community. The pursuit of job- and career-related information automatically involves the librarian with other agencies. As an information specialist the librarian makes an important contribution to their activities, and in turn makes the library a dynamic part of the community.

A library with a JIC often discovers a need to also provide more in-depth educational information for patrons. The Schenectady Public Library originally had a small unstaffed job information center and a separate (staffed) educational information service. The librarian in charge of educational information found herself "running all over the library getting books and pamphlets to give people an idea of what they might be doing if they went into police or fire work or vocational counseling." The two services have recently been combined and enlarged to form a Career and Education Information Center, which is located in a large and prominent area next to the main library entrance.

A job information center is probably the easiest first step a public library can take to expand its services to the community at large. As the director of the Hempstead Public Library observes: "The stereotyping of the library as a storehouse for books has got to change. Vital information resources are here in any public library across the country. The potential is here, and once the people know it is here, they'll begin to demand what is rightfully theirs."